



Sharing our stories GRATITUDE REPORT 2021





Letter from Our Executive Director

Dear Friends of L'Arche Atlanta,

L'Arche Atlanta's mission is to transform lives by building community among people with and without disabilities, working towards **our vision of a world where everyone belongs**. Our three programmatic streams naturally flow from one to another:

In our **L'Arche home**, Core Members and assistants share life together, like a family.

We bring the joyful sense of belonging found in the L'Arche home into the broader community through our **community events**.

These friendships compel us to **advocate** with people with disabilities for their right to decide where they live and to receive the support they need to do so.

This work is supported by L'Arche's dedicated staff, board, and our enthusiastic volunteers and donors – **that's you!** Because of you, L'Arche's circle of belonging is ever-widening. Last year, more than 780 people participated in L'Arche events (dinners, community events, volunteer activities, and more) both in person and online. Many of the **events were focused on providing a platform for people with disabilities to share their stories** through activities such as our small group writing classes, *6,000 Waiting* film, and Treasure Maps Roadshow.

While society wants to move people with disabilities to the periphery, where they cannot be seen or heard, L'Arche asks people with disabilities to come into the spotlight and hands them the microphone. This is part of how L'Arche imagines community differently: by **centering the stories of people with disabilities, challenging the narratives** that make ability normative and disability something to be cured or ignored. We've included links to their stories in this report, as well as some written snippets – we know you will enjoy hearing their stories firsthand.

This year, L'Arche Atlanta will celebrate our 10th anniversary! We are so grateful to our founding board, staff, donors, volunteers, and Core Members who jumped in with full hearts to plant this community. In April 2022 we (*finally!*) got word that our housing permit has been approved for the second house! We are actively hiring a second assistant team, and we hope our newest Core Members will move in this summer.

Thank you for supporting us as we write the next chapter of our story in Atlanta. We are so grateful for this amazing community that continues to share life together, elevating the voices of people with disabilities, and creating places where mutually-transformative friendships can grow.

Gratefully,

Tim Moore
Executive Director | Community Leader

Three programs that **MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

Home-Based Professional Services

Community life at L'Arche Atlanta is centered around our home (soon to be two!) where people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), known as Core Members, are at the heart (*coeur* in French) of our daily life together. **Core Members and assistants learn, grow, and deepen in mutual relationships, defining success as an attitude of inclusion.** We provide high-quality living environments, individualized healthcare coordination, and authentic mutual relationships so each Core Member can thrive as a vital member of the community.

Community Events & CONNEXIONS

Building community through relationships, one by one, is at the heart of our mission. Through our events, **we bring the celebration, spirituality, and connection found in the L'Arche home into the broader community.** At these gatherings people with disabilities, their families, and the wider community are drawn to L'Arche's unique hospitality and come to celebrate by sharing their gifts. In 2021, we hosted both in-person (when the virus count was low) and virtual meet-ups to connect with our larger community of people with and without disabilities. Tuesday Trivia remains a popular virtual gathering. **All of our 2021 in-person events celebrated the stories and creativity of people with disabilities.**

Advocacy

L'Arche Atlanta advocates with people with disabilities to have the right to decide where they live, the resources to do so, and the support they need to thrive in the community of their choice. To advocate at the state level, we partner with the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities through the *Storytelling Project*, a state-wide initiative to educate and motivate state legislators to act on issues that affect Georgians with disabilities by giving them a voice to share their stories. In 2021, the *Storytelling Project* released the film *6,000 Waiting* (www.6000waiting.com), dropped the second season of the *Hidden Voices* podcast, and hosted *Treasure Maps*, a traveling roadshow.

Advocacy in Action

6,000 Waiting follows three people with IDD in Georgia through their journey to obtain a COMP waiver, while examining how the state's waiting list for the waiver ballooned to more than 6,000 people.





“One of the things I love most about doing plays with the kids is that since I write them, I know that all the kids get a part. If you want a part, you get one. You get to be visible and seen. And I'm just so thankful for my church and the voice that they've given me because **I am seen and that's the most important thing to me.**”

~ Jessica Winowich
Treasure Maps film

Sharing our stories

L'Arche elevates the voices of people with disabilities,
& we have so much fun doing it!

Treasure Maps Roadshow

Treasure Maps is a film featuring 10 **Georgians with developmental disabilities telling their stories**, created by L'Arche's *Storytelling Project* team in 2021. The film was shared live in a drive-in Roadshow, in partnership with nonprofits across the state. **The Roadshow was an incredible success** – 520 people in six cities attended the film events! Our local Atlanta event was co-hosted by five of the film's storytellers and Jim Burress of WABE. Atlanta's Seed & Feed band performed, and local makers with disabilities sold their arts and crafts. It was a wonderful evening celebrating all the gifts in our community!

WATCH IT



Treasure Maps film

Story Weavers Workshops

In partnership with CowTipping Press, L'Arche Atlanta offered **three semesters of online creative writing classes**, each week focusing on a different type of writing: poetry, drama, fiction, and more! Our participants absolutely loved the classes and wrote their hearts out for each session. Each cohort's writing was **published in a book, available on Amazon**. Michael, one of the authors, said, "I hope we can do this class again next year! I want to do more activities like this. I like all the different topics in the class." They had a great time at the book release party too, where the **authors read their writing to an enthusiastic coffeehouse audience**.

BUY THE BOOKS



Story Weavers books on amazon.com



My Chocolate Dream
 by Mae Rosen
Story Weavers Participant

“My dream starts with eating chocolate cake and then buying more chocolate cake. The chocolate cake smells chocolatey. Then going ice skating and then going to the movies. And that’s it.”

“Say I want something ridiculous, like a mediocre American life. The government would say, 'we can't support that right now' and they'd place me on a waiting list with 6,000 others.”

~ Ben Oxley
6,000 Waiting film

6,000 Waiting

6,000 Waiting, a powerful disability-advocacy mini-documentary, premiered January 2021 and was featured at eleven 2021 film festivals, it won Best Documentary Short at the Montreal Independent Film Festival, and it was long-listed for an Academy Award!

More than 4,500 people have seen 6,000 Waiting at over 65 screenings, plus hundreds more at film festivals.

6,000 Waiting was produced by L'Arche's Storytelling Project team and we are grateful it accomplished its intended

impact: hundreds of people were motivated by the stories of the film's three stars to contact their Georgia legislators to advocate for an increase in waiver funding, resulting in a **413% increase (from 100 to 513)**

in the number of waivers funded in next year's budget! We also hoped that Nick, one of the film's storytellers who has been stuck for years in a nursing home, would receive a COMP waiver and that happened, too! Thank you to everyone who hosted 6,000 Waiting viewing parties and wrote your legislators! Because of you, 413 more people with disabilities will be able to experience integrated community life!

LEARN MORE



6,000 Waiting website

**67
masterpieces**

created by artists at
Painting in the Park
in November

**840 trivia
questions**
asked in **35 Tuesday
Trivia meet-ups**, with a
total of **71 participants**
(some joining us many times!)

**73
auction items**

purchased during
our **9th Birthday
Benefit & Auction**

By the numbers:
MORE 2021 HIGHLIGHTS!

**22 Community
Council
members**

volunteered to help
plan activities, bring meals,
solicit auction items, &
host community events



**78 stories,
poems, &
dramas**

by **23 Story Weavers
authors** published in
3 compilation books



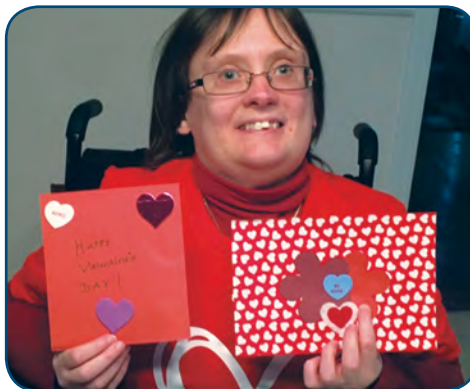
**8,326
YouTube views**

of **5 lip sync videos**
and **\$18,200 donated**
by **209 fans** to make
L'Arche Atlanta win **1st place**
in Battle of the Fans!



14 friends

shot baskets during
L'Arche Madness
(and **206 donors** from
27 states gave **\$34,709**
to grow our community!)



10 devices
(iPads & Chromebooks)
given to people
with disabilities
to make our virtual
gatherings accessible

THE L'ARCHE DIFFERENCE

The impact of belonging to a L'Arche community

From 2020-21, six L'Arche communities in the U.S. participated in a third-party evaluation* that examined how **both L'Arche Core Members and Non-Core Members** are impacted as a result of being part of a L'Arche community. After 235 surveys and 125 interviews, the impact is clear! Here's what the evaluator discovered.

5 Ways L'Arche is Making A Difference

- 1. Increased Capacity for Care & Community.** Because of L'Arche, Members have an increased capacity for caring, relationships, and building community, reporting:
 - > Being more aware of disability advocacy issues
 - > Recognizing the gifts and capabilities of people with disabilities
 - > Increased comfort in being with people who are different
- 2. Transformational Character Formation.** Because of L'Arche, Members experience transformation in their personal character, reporting:
 - > Being more open to people – more gentle, patient, and sensitive
 - > Feeling compelled to advocate with those denied power
 - > Growing in their capacity to love themselves and others
- 3. Personal Growth & Development.** As a result of their time at L'Arche, Members experience personal growth and development, reporting:
 - > Becoming the most authentic version of themselves
 - > Spiritual growth and a strengthened faith
 - > Feeling confident communicating with people across differences
- 4. Influence on Sense of Life Purpose.** Members report their sense of purpose in life has been influenced and informed by their time at L'Arche, including:
 - > Enjoying being part of a team working toward shared goals
 - > Developing human-centered career goals and seeking out career opportunities that serve people
 - > Increased confidence in taking a vocational path that fits their values
 - > A stronger sense of purpose and having a lot of goals for their lives
- 5. Unique Experiences.** Members feel they are a part of something different at L'Arche, including:
 - > A sense that their L'Arche community is like a family
 - > Sharing joy through laughter and humor as part of common daily life
 - > Core Members feel safe at L'Arche

Two Types of L'Arche Members

Core Members:

People with disabilities who live in L'Arche homes, the heart of our communities

Non-Core Members:

People who share life with Core Members – house assistants, other staff, board members, volunteers, and family members

Core Members specifically reported...

- > Valuing the independence L'Arche offers
- > Feeling more confident
- > Better understanding the choices in their lives
- > Enjoying making their own choices
- > Feeling comfortable working on their weaknesses at L'Arche, because they feel valued

WHAT IMPACT

does L'Arche make?

After spending time in a L'Arche community, people become **more caring, loving, authentic, people-focused, and joyful!**

They become **advocates for the vulnerable** and pursue careers to **serve others!**

*The evaluation was facilitated by Dialogues In Action. The results were published in *L'Arche USA: Project Impact Report*. The full report is available at www.LArcheUSA.org/about/impact-study



Sharing meals together is such an important part of L'Arche's community life. Friends and family members commissioned a table for the new house in memory of Anne-Christine Armstrong, the wife of L'Arche Atlanta's founding Community Leader, Curt Armstrong. The table was made from a magnolia tree that fell at Agnes Scott College, where L'Arche International held its general assembly in 2012. The table has already hosted many community meals, and we are so grateful for such a beautiful and meaningful piece.

OUR SECOND HOME: *a place to belong*

With the support of our generous donors, on May 8, 2020, L'Arche Atlanta purchased a seven-bedroom house on Clairemont Road in Decatur. May 6, 2021 brought the completion of the remodeling process to turn the house into a nine-bedroom home that is safe, stable, and accessible for people with disabilities! Thanks to many more generous donors who donated furniture, appliances, and household items, **the house is now a home and ready for residents!**

Before new Core Members could live in the home, we needed to acquire various permits from the Department of Community Health. Although we knew there would be COVID-related backlogs, the permitting process was quite frustrating as we were met with multiple roadblocks. In December 2021, we contacted our local state representative, Rep. Mary Margaret Oliver, to ask for assistance navigating this opaque system. With Rep. Oliver's help, we started to receive responses to our inquiries.

We have invited four new Core Members to live in the Clairemont house. When the

families saw the home for the first time, one parent said, "It is difficult to imagine your daughter being cared for by someone besides yourself, but when I saw this home, I felt a huge sense of peace. **I knew that whoever took such good care of a home would take good care of our daughter.**"

While waiting for permitting, we hosted a six-week summer program at the Clairemont house to begin acclimating the invited Core Members to each other, our existing Oakhurst house Core Members, the staff, and the house itself. Through the fall and winter, the new Core Members gathered with the L'Arche community for monthly dinners at the Clairemont house to foster the friendships that had begun over the summer.

In addition, this summer our current Core Members and live-in assistants temporarily moved into the new Clairemont house for two weeks while the Oakhurst house underwent significant and much-needed home repairs, including refinishing all the floors. Having the Clairemont house available for our house team during these home repairs was such a gift!

As of April 8, 2022, *the house has been fully permitted* by the Department of Community Health! Now we can (*and are!*) actively hiring and training a second assistant team to support our new Core Members. Assistants go through six weeks of training prior to supporting Core Members. **We hope to have a fully trained staff and start welcoming Core Members as early as this July.**

IN 2021, WE CELEBRATED ...

9th BIRTHDAY BENEFIT & AUCTION

In September L'Arche Atlanta celebrated our 9th anniversary with a virtual auction event. Despite not gathering in person, the L'Arche community turned "lemons into lemonade" and joined us for a wonderful live-streamed celebration. **Generous event sponsors and participants gave \$200,000 to support our community!**



9th BIRTHDAY BENEFIT & AUCTION SPONSORS

GOLD



Robbie Harris

ATLANTA



**Shayla & Chip Rumely
Dan Marks & Keri Powell**

SILVER

ANDERSEN | TATE | CARR



Immanuel Anglican Church



Kristen M. Lewis
ATTORNEY AT LAW



Seyfarth

**Marilyn & Dean Hammond
Shannon Powell & Paul Duda | Ann & Steve Rushing**

BRONZE

Organizations

Atlanta Braves Decatur Family YMCA
Audi Atlanta The Fox Theater
Columbia Seminary St. Thomas More Church

Individuals

Beth Allgood-Justice Gue & Bill Hudson
Jim & Pat Barlow Bill McKinnon
Susan & Dave Dieters Steve & Julie Siler
Ann Glendinning & Dale Kelly Camerin Watson

... NOW SAVE THE DATE FOR 2022!

10th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION



BENEFIT & AUCTION

Sunday, October 2, 2022 | 4:00 – 7:00 p.m.
DeKalb Conference Center

L'Arche Atlanta's 10th Anniversary Benefit & Auction will be a memorable afternoon celebrating the important milestone in our community and all the qualities, values, and people that have brought us to this point and will carry us forward.

TICKETS GO ON SALE IN JULY!

Who will you invite to join you?

Thank you

FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

L'Arche Atlanta's rich community life is only possible because of the generosity of our donors. **Thank you** to everyone who supported our community in 2021. While our Core Members are the heartbeat of the community, our donors are its lifeblood. **In 2021...**

L'Arche Atlanta
donors gave

\$673,388

a **22% increase** from 2020

736

households, businesses,
faith communities, &
foundations donated
to L'Arche Atlanta



Welcome!

14

households
joined the Heart of
L'Arche Society

18

households
joined the L'Arche
Luminaries

100

volunteers brought
meals to the house,
wrote trivia questions,
helped with house
renovations,
& much more!

Thank you all so much for your generosity!

Your kindness is recognized each day by the members of the L'Arche Atlanta community.

HELP US CREATE

a place of welcome!

L'Arche Atlanta is grateful to all our donors who create places of welcome. Consider making an ongoing commitment to further our mission by joining the Heart of L'Arche Society or our monthly donor program. Both options offer an **easy way to make regular donations that support and sustain our community.**


Heart of L'Arche

By joining the Heart of L'Arche Society, you help fund our most vital initiatives.

These beloved donors pledge \$1,000 or more per year for three consecutive years, gifts that fund our long-term goals. By committing to the Heart of L'Arche Society, you are helping to ensure the future of L'Arche.

The L'Arche Luminaries are a special community of people dedicated to creating a place of belonging for people with disabilities. Your gift of \$30, \$50, or \$100 each month helps adults with disabilities become appreciated and valued members of our local community and beyond.



To join one of our donor communities, please contact Megan Denton, Director of Development & Communications, at megan@larcheatlanta.org

2021 Board of Directors

Officers

- › **Chair:** Jim Swartz – Seyfarth Shaw LLP
- › **Vice Chair:** Shayla Rumely – Community Volunteer
- › **Treasurer:** Ann Rushing – Rushing CPA
- › **Secretary:** Brandon Maxwell – Ogletree Deakins

Members at Large

- › Haqiqa Bolling – Retired Counselor
- › Marilyn Hammond – Communications Consultant
- › Robbie Harris – Robbie Harris ATL Realtor
- › Jasmine Terry Okafor – Association for Clinical Pastoral Education
- › Gail Schaffer – Lueder, Larkin, & Hunt LLC
- › Steve Siler – Mercy Care Foundation
- › Matthew Smith – Anderson, Tate, & Carr
- › Rev. Mary Anona Stoops – North Decatur Presbyterian Church
- › Dr. Khalia Williams – Candler School of Theology
- › Alan Yorker – Retired Psychologist & Teacher

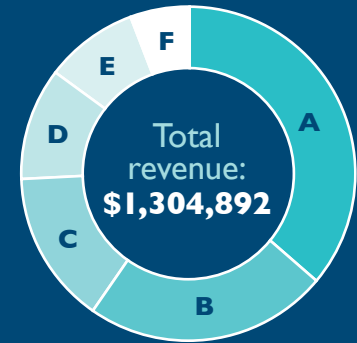
2021 Advisory Council

- › Gué Hudson – Retired Dean of Students, Agnes Scott College
- › Mary Margaret Oliver – Georgia House of Representatives
- › Elizabeth Pearce – The Lovett School
- › Shannon Powell – Avondale Estates City Hall
- › Lizanne Stephenson – Community Volunteer

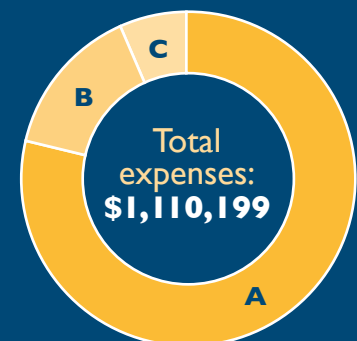


“Atlanta Skyline” by Terry Hochschild. This painting by Terry inspires us to **imagine community differently**, one where people with disabilities are seen for the gifts they offer our community. Thank you for creating a place where Terry's gifts are valued.

2021 Financials



- A** → Contributions: **35%**
(Individuals, Foundations, Businesses, Faith Organizations)
- B** → Medicaid Agency Funding: **24%**
- C** → 9th Birthday Benefit & Auction: **14%**
- D** → Government Grants: **11%**
- E** → GCDD Storytelling Project Grant: **10%**
- F** → Other: **6%**




- A** → Program Services: **79%**
- B** → Management & General: **14%**
- C** → Fundraising: **7%**

L'Arche Atlanta earned a 2021 GuideStar Platinum Seal of Transparency, GuideStar's highest level of recognition.

This seal demonstrates **L'Arche Atlanta's commitment to transparency** and to giving donors meaningful data to evaluate our nonprofit performance.





 LArcheAtlanta.org

 facebook.com/larcheATL

 instagram.com/larcheatlanta



L'Arche Atlanta

is a member organization of the International Federation of L'Arche, founded in France in 1964. L'Arche is French for "the ark," signifying a *welcoming place of refuge where people are nurtured with love, creating a space for mutually transformative friendships.*

Today, there are 154 L'Arche communities in 38 countries. These communities are united in the mission to *reveal the gifts of adults with disabilities and build relationships among people with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities.*

L'Arche Atlanta | P.O. Box 2359 | Decatur, GA 30031 | 470/582-0008
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